



**King County  
Records and Elections Division**

Recorder's Office

Department of Information  
and Administrative Services

King County Administration Building  
500 Fourth Avenue, Room 311  
Seattle, WA 98104-2337

**(206) 296-1570**  
**(206) 296-0109 TDD**  
**(206) 205-8396 FAX**

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TO: All Persons Involved With Submitting or Accepting Documents For Recording

FM: Walter E. Washington, Superintendent, King County Records

RE: **Document Legibility for Digital Imaging**

It has come to our attention that documents submitted for recording and digital imaging do not always meet minimum legibility requirements and do not make a quality reproduction. It is our goal to increase awareness of these requirements and improve the quality of images stored without causing unnecessary rejection of documents submitted for recording.

We are obligated by RCW to reject documents for recording not suitable for producing legible reproductions.

*RCW 65.04.015 "**Legible and capable of being imaged**" means all text, seals, drawings, signatures, or other content within the document must be legible and capable of producing a readable image, regardless of what process is used for recording."*

*RCW 65.04.045 In part, "All text within the document must be of sufficient color and clarity to ensure that **when the text is imaged** all text is readable . . . and have all seals legible and capable of being imaged."*

*RCW 65.04.048 In part, "Documents which do not meet legibility requirements **must not** be recorded as a nonstandard recording."*

In short, the goal of imaging a recorded document is to be able to reproduce it, either by viewing or printing, and **accurately extract information** from the reproduction. The real test is not whether the original document is legible to the human eye but whether the scanned image is legible.

It would require a highly subjective analysis of the submitted document to try to guess whether it would produce a legible reproduction so we have set up a test scanner station that will quickly scan the document and display it.

If the information can be accurately extracted (viewed and/or printed), then the document is legible.

**Documents will not be accepted for recording if content is not legible where an expectation of legibility exists.**

It is our hope that submitters of documents will be able to reduce the number of rejected documents (and prevent business delays) by screening for the following:

1. Dot-Matrix printing generally produces poor quality images. If necessary for multi-part forms, use high-density mode or a pen, or typewriter with a dark color ink.
2. Faded ribbon or weak color. Use black or dark blue.
3. Scribbled non-legible entry line-outs and corrections on forms. Fill out a new form.
4. Photocopy too light or dark. Recopy and change settings.
5. Other formatting requirements (see attached).

# Standard Formatting Requirements for Recording Documents

(Pursuant to RCW 36.18.010 and 65.04.045)

Beginning 1/1/1997 all documents submitted for recording in the State of Washington must conform to standards required by RCW 36.18 and 65.04. A cover sheet is required for documents that do not contain the necessary index fields or margins on the 1<sup>st</sup> page.

**For Documents signed after 1996, all pages must have a 1" clear border in order to use a cover sheet.**

1) **ALL PAGES:**

- a) Documents submitted for recording must be able to be digitally scanned and reproduce a legible copy, including notary seals (raised notary seals must be smudged prior to recording). **Documents that contain illegible portions will not be accepted for recording.**
- b) Nothing may be affixed to pages (no item can be taped, stapled, etc. – no cut and paste)
- c) Page must be 8 ½" x 14" or less
- d) Font size must be at least 8-point (This is 8-point type)
- e) Paper and ink color must be **capable of being imaged**. Watch for color of highlighting, some colors copy dark, obscuring text. ***Dot-matrix printers generally produce unacceptable results.***

2) **MARGINS:**

- a) 1<sup>st</sup> page 3" top margin, 1" sides and bottom margin – or 1" on all sides with a cover sheet.
  - i) Return address shall be in the 3" top margin
- b) Subsequent pages of same document must have 1" margin on all sides
- c) *Incidental* writing and notary seals in margins are allowed.

3) **FIRST PAGE:**

- a) Title
- b) Reference # for assignments and releases
- c) Grantor(s) and Grantee(s)
- d) Legal description (not needed on assignments, releases, etc.)
- e) Tax parcel ID# required if there is a legal description (not needed on liens, assignments, releases, etc.).

- 4) Certified copies of previously recorded or filed documents may be recorded with a completed cover sheet.

5) **EXCEPTIONS:**

- a) The following exceptions for formatting standards can be recorded without a cover sheet:
  - i) IRS Tax Liens and releases
  - ii) UCC terminations in which the original UCC fixture filing was completed prior to January 1, 1997 and the termination statement is on the fixture filing
  - iii) Documents previously recorded (in any recording office) may have recording information in the margins.
- b) The following exceptions for formatting standards can be recorded with a properly completed cover sheet:
  - i) Documents which are formatted to meet court requirements (filed documents)
  - ii) death certificates
  - iii) documents signed prior to 1997
  - iv) military discharges
  - v) out of country documents
  - vi) court documents
  - vii) National UCC Forms

## **RECORDING FEES:**

Most documents, first page, legal size or less \$19.00 Each additional or backside page, legal size or less \$1.00.

Documents, which contain two or more transactions in the title and/or require multiple indexing, will be charged \$19.00 for each title and/or transaction. Additional pages will be charged only once for each document. A cover sheet is considered an additional page and will be charged the additional page recording fee (\$1.00).

RCW 65.04.048 allows recording of nonstandard documents for an additional fee of **\$50.00**. "Nonstandard" refers to documents that do not meet margin and format requirements. The legislation does not include recording of documents that do not meet legibility requirements. Those documents submitted for recording that are not legible as defined RCW 65.04.015 will not be accepted for recording under any circumstances. All nonstandard documents must have a **cover sheet** which meets 1<sup>st</sup> page margin requirements and contain a statement signed by the requester to read substantially as follows: **"I am requesting an emergency nonstandard recording for an additional fee as provided in RCW 36.18.010. I understand that the recording processing requirements may cover up or otherwise obscure some part of the text of the original document."**

